



# ARCC UPDATE

October 2010

## *Alfas at the Glen, 2010*

by George Beston, Cobourg

For the second time in five years, Alfa Romeo has been honoured by being named the Featured Marque at the Watkins Glen Vintage Grand Prix.

This triggered the Stone Bridge Driver's club to organize its usual Tour de Marque events around the occasion, so there was lots to do.

A number of us from the Toronto Chapter drove to the area together along a route which had been researched and scouted by Tony and Barb Adams.

Our marshalling point on Thursday morning was at a Tim Horton's location in St. Catherines. From there, we drove along the QEW to the border at Ft. Erie / Buffalo. After crossing the Peace Bridge and only about a five minute wait in line, we passed muster with the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol and proceeded eastbound to our rendezvous point after the first toll booth along Interstate 90, aka the New York Thruway, aka the Governor Thomas E. Dewey Thruway. Confused yet? We proceeded eastbound along Interstate 90 with a brief pit stop at a service area, then south on Interstate 390 for a few miles to NY State Routes 20 and 5 eastbound. From this point the scenery became progressively more beautiful and interesting. It started with rolling, lush looking farmland and pretty villages, and ended up with spectacular views along the deep valley containing Canandaiga Lake. Even though I've travelled around New York state a great many times over the years, I was still a little surprised by the rustic beauty of this area. It's well worth a visit given the least excuse.

We paused for a welcome break and lunch at the Brown Hound Bistro in Bristol Springs, near Naples, New York. We were met there by a number of other ARCC members who were unable to join the group earlier. After visiting and enjoying a flavourful meal, we headed across country to our various hotels, enjoying more beautiful scenery along the way.

Friday started early, with an 8:00 AM rendezvous at the Wings of Eagles Museum in Corning. There were about 80 Alfas participating.



*Photo by Gord Zimmerman.*

I don't know what time HE got there, but that's Dave Creer's Giulia Spider in the centre of the front row!

We had our rather quick drive to Watkins Glen International facilitated by Schuyler County Sherriff's deputies, who waved the group through numerous intersections. We then paused for a brunch, and that was followed by parade laps of WGI and then, after a short break, parade laps of the original road course. As in 2005 it was thrilling to be cheered by the crowd as we drove along the main street of Watkins Glen at a rapid pace.

There is much more to report on including our Friday dinner with the Alfa Romeo group within VSCA, and the qualifying and racing on Saturday and Sunday. I'll try to gather my thoughts and add to this report in the next Update issue.

## ***Adventures in Alfa Country II***

by Oliver Collins, Toronto

### ***The Adventure Continues...***

*Editor's note: the first part of this diary was published in the June issue of the Update – G.B.*

### ***Thursday May 20 to Wednesday May 26***

Alain and Vivian Raoult, our friends from Toronto, arrived today from their home in France. Their plan was to spend the night at my place in Como and then for all of us to travel to Prague to visit friends there with an overnight stop in Munich along the way. The drive north along the east side of Lake Como was spectacular. We took the winding road along the lakeside but mostly about 50 metres above the water, following it all the way to the top of the lake and into Switzerland. Once into the Alps we followed a switchback road that took us over the pass with incredible views of the mountain peaks and valleys below. We arrived in Munich, found our hotel, and headed to the city centre for some sightseeing and dinner. Of course we had a typical meal of sauerkraut, sausage and beer and it hit the spot after our long drive.

The next day we were off to Prague with a stop in Plzn for another lunch of Pilsner beer (what else in the home of pilsner?), sauerkraut and duck, not sausage this time. We arrived at our hotel at about 4:00 PM. Prague is a very picturesque city, with traditional ornate buildings everywhere and a few modern gems like Frank Gehry's 'Fred and Ginger' building, the swaying de-constructivist edifice. I met up at a cafe with my friend George Singer who had moved back there to his birthplace from Toronto a few years ago. He had recommended a hotel next to the Intercontinental that they run as apartments for rent. It was much nicer than a hotel room as it had a separate bedroom, living room and a kitchenette, all very modern.

We spent the next few days wandering around and sitting in cafés catching up on each others' lives. Saturday evening we arranged to get together for dinner with Alain and Vivian and their friends (all staying at a different hotel on the other side of the river). The restaurant was a modern café by the river with excellent food and we had a lot of laughs with George telling us humorous stories about Prague during its time under the communists.

Tuesday morning we left Prague and stopped for lunch at Cesky Krumlov, a small medieval town in southern Czech Republic, that the Charles River circles around creating a moat-like effect. Salzburg, with a nice old town centre to visit, was our stopover for the night on the way back to Como. The drive down the valley from Innsbruck Austria to

Verona Italy was breathtaking. The Dolomite mountains on each side dotted with little towns and castles here and there were very picturesque. I decided I would bring Lucie back for a tour of this area when she returned. On Wednesday evening I had a nice farewell dinner with Alain and Vivian in Como and the next morning they were on their way back to the south of France.

### ***Sunday May 30***

At last, Lucie returned from Toronto today. Aside from the trip to Prague, the last month was very boring. The weather was mostly rainy so I couldn't sit outside and I'm not as motivated to do things when I'm alone. Lucie can't sit still for long, so she always keeps us on the move doing something.

After I pick her up at Malpensa airport we dropped in on Dorien's Mom to pick up a parcel he wanted me to bring back. It was too big for our largest suitcase! So, after a nice visit and lunch we head for Como.

### ***Wednesday & Thursday, June 2-3***

After a couple days showing Lucie around Como, we decided to drive along the west side of Lake Como to Switzerland and up through the Alps to St. Moritz for lunch then on to Innsbruck for the night. It is the same spectacular drive I did with Alain and Vivian. The view along the lakeside on a sunny day is unbelievable. It is easy to see why Lago de Como has such a world-wide reputation. It is one long picture postcard. Again the drive through the Alps was also breathtaking. We found St. Moritz a bit too modern and characterless but we did have a very nice cheese fondue lunch. Innsbruck's old town centre was more interesting even though it was raining heavily. This rainy weather seems to have been a constant on both my trips north of the Alps. There was also a modern new ski jump by architect Zaha Hadid worth seeing. We returned along the Dolomite valley previously mentioned and had lunch in Lazise on Lake Garda near Verona. The weather in Italy was also still sunny. It was interesting to see how the autostrada speed limit sign changed from 100kph in Austria to 130kph as soon as we crossed the Italian border. We were back in Como by nightfall.

### ***Saturday June 5***

Friends mentioned that there was a vintage race weekend at Monza on Saturday so I thought it would be a good time to visit this historic track. Monza is just on the north east outskirts of Milan and the drive to the track is anything but pleasant. Partly due to the same road construction holdups we get at home but also because there is no expressway into the city, just a lot of regular roads,

local traffic and stop lights. I'd hate to be doing it at Grand Prix time with the thousands that attend. We finally got into the parking lot, arriving at the same time as our friend Orietta. Her husband Pierangelo, who is 75, and has a large car collection, had ridden to the track on his vintage scooter from the south end of Milan. The paddock was full of Alfas as well as other interesting vintage racers from as far as England. I now know where all the GTA's are. There were at least ten of them there. There was also a vendors' market with interesting things for sale from models to books to car parts. We watched the track events for a while but found the paddock area more interesting with its vast array of vintage cars and people to chat with. This is how your network of friends and contacts spreads: while taking to a friend you get introduced to someone new who later introduces you to another person etc. etc. Two of these new acquaintances were Giancarlo Massolo, one of the RIAR representatives, and Zbigniew Maurer who is now a designer at Alfa Stile, Alfa's in-house design studio. He spotted my Gilles Villeneuve t-shirt with Canada on it, asked if I was a member of ARCC and proudly told me his membership number was 953 from when he lived in Canada in the late eighties. He still carries it. I said I had been a member for some time and my membership number was 1. Giancarlo was very impressed, and yelled 'BRAVO!'.

Pierangelo and Orietta's son Carlo (who is married to Alessandra, daughter of Claudio Girogetti, our friend at AFRA ....Alfa people are a close knit group) was racing that day with his GTA. When we visited the family the following week to see their car collection he had the head off for some fine tuning and it was back on the track a week later for the Alfa Centenary event. After a tiring day in the sun we headed back to Como by the back roads rather than the Autostrada.

### ***Wednesday June 9***

After a few more days lingering around Como we packed up all of our luggage, which had grown appreciably with literature, souvenirs and purchases from the various events., and said good bye to our apartment in Como. On Tuesday we deposited all the unnecessary luggage in the storage garage with the Alfa and returned the Fiat to Dorien's Mom. Wednesday morning we flew off to Beirut to visit Lucie's family for ten days. In spite of what you may have heard or read in the media it is not a dangerous place (now). The old part has been restored to a wonderful city centre with cafés and shops lining the streets. There is a new shopping centre and we visited a new Hermes store (one of my clients) about to open. Luxury condos line the hills around Beirut, most with beautiful views of

the city below and the sea beyond that. Higher up in the hills are little towns where they go to escape the summer heat and where you also find many of the best restaurants. The suburbs are quite chaotic in terms of town planning. It seems when someone has a piece of isolated land and he builds a condo they just wiggle a road over to it from the nearest access. Hence the roads run helter-skelter everywhere, most with no names (at least no street signs) and no numbers on the buildings. I never did figure out how they get mail or pizza deliveries. Traffic into the city is also chaotic and heavy. The relative peacefulness of the city centre by the sea is like an oasis.

### ***Sunday June 20***

After arriving back in Italy we rented a car at the Milan airport. They promise you an Alfa but there is never one available when you get there. We decided to do some site-seeing before the Alfa Centennial Celebrations the next weekend.

On our way south to Cinque Terre, one of the biggest tourist attractions in NW Italy, we headed for Parma to see what we could learn about the production of Parmigiano-Reggiano (also known as Parmesan cheese) which is produced exclusively in this area. We stayed in another Agro-tourism hotel (a farm converted to a hotel). It was very modern inside but an actual working farm outside, much like the one we stayed at in Asti.

### ***Monday June 21***

In the morning we bought some incredible Parmigiano cheese to bring home (sadly it's almost gone now) but never did see it produced. Apparently it is always made in the early hours of the day, and we missed it. We then decided we should also check out the Balsamic vinegar industry in nearby Modena. Most of you would likely head straight to the Ferrari factory in Maranello if you were anywhere near Modena but I had been there recently and aside from saying you've been to Mecca, there isn't much to see other than their museum and a lot of shops selling Ferrari mementos. We did stop at the Stanguellini museum in Modena, where I had also been recently, but my Stanguellini Formula Jr. is a little closer to my heart than a Ferrari.

After some searching, and a terrific lunch break at the Michelin guide restaurant we came across, we did find a Balsamic vinegar producer (much like visiting a vineyard for wine tasting) and sampled various ages and types of vinegar. Of course we bought a few, including a 2oz bottle of 25 year old Balsamic vinegar for 50 Euros (\$65). It is like eating tart honey. Wonderful on ice cream!

## ***Tuesday June 22***

The next morning we are off to La Spezia, the port near Cinque Terre. Cinque Terre is a group of 5 villages along the Mediterranean coast south of Genoa that are theoretically not accessible by land, although we did see delivery vans there. They are very picturesque as they hang from the mountain side over the sea and are connected to each other by a footpath (along the cliffs over the sea) as well as a train. Our hotel in La Spezia recommended we take the boat and stay on it to the fifth village although it stops at each one, then take the train back to La Spezia. This way we would see all the villages from the sea and the train stops at each one on the return so we can visit them as we please. There are flat rate tickets to do this, as well as an all inclusive pass that also allows you to use the footpaths between the villages. This was a great recommendation as we loved the view and photos from the sea. As usual I found the village visits on the way back too touristy, with too many people (and this was June, imagine July!) and shops selling all the usual tourist junk. However, we did have a nice lunch of a local whole fish (you soon take this for granted in Italy). The evening meal in an underground cavern in old La Spezia was also a novelty. Wednesday we drove back to Milan along the Mediterranean coast up to Genoa, visiting Portofino, and stopping for a swim and lunch at Santa Margherita. This is one of the most scenic drives in Italy. We were told it is 10 degrees warmer here in winter than in Milan only an hour away.

## ***Thursday June 24***

The Alfa Centenary weekend started with a track day at Monza. All those registered for the weekend's events were eligible to take their Alfas on the track. This time the parking lot was as interesting as the paddock. Many attendees like myself brought their vintage Alfas but were not taking them on the track. All the usual suspects were there that we had met over the last couple of months so it was a very social event too. Some new folks had arrived from other countries with their Alfas as well. I bought several bottles of wine there offered as part of the centennial. The wine wasn't special but the bottles were moulded with a 3 dimensional Alfa grille on them where the label usually is with a coloured Alfa badge on top. Lucie hadn't come with me as she had not really had any time to shop in Milan so she stayed downtown and we agreed to meet back at the Alfa storage unit in central Milan where we had left the rental car.

If anyone was to ask me what is the most important thing to have on a visit to Italy, I would say three things: a local cell phone (it's cheap to buy and use

there), an ATM card (be sure you check yours out for international withdrawals with your bank before you go and change to a 4 digit -no letters-password) and a GPS for Europe. We have traveled all over the world without any navigational problems but driving in Italy (Milan especially) is a challenge. The drivers, although they may appear reckless, are excellent. You rarely find someone poking along in the fast lane or asleep at the wheel in the middle of the city, like you do here. There are very few street signs and the street names change almost at every intersection so following a map is very frustrating, and can lead to divorce. I mention this because on my way back from Monza my GPS battery died in the middle of Milan and I didn't have a map in the Alfa. I just kept driving nervously hoping to spot a service station or somewhere to buy a map or ask directions. After about 15 minutes (it seemed like hours) I spotted a familiar statue in the middle of a piazza that I knew was a couple of blocks from my destination. While circling the statue I recognized the street that joined the two and I was home free.

I met Lucie and we got the rental car (and all that luggage we had left there before going to Beirut) and headed for the convention hotel where we would spend the weekend with the 6C 2500 club and join various celebrations.

It was now about 5:30 PM and the next challenge was for Lucie to drive the rental car from the center of Milan to the hotel on the outskirts in San Donato Milanese (near Linate airport) in rush hour and she doesn't drive a standard transmission. You have no doubt heard about the challenges of driving in Italy. The poor woman is put into a standard transmission car in the centre of Milan and told 'see you at the hotel'. Not quite. After a few rounds of her practicing stops and starts in the parking lot, we were off. I kept her in my sights behind me, but she often didn't make it through a traffic light that I had or got held up at a busy traffic circle. At one point I had to park the Alfa and walk back to the other side of the busy traffic circle to drive the rental car through it for her. I'm surprised we're still married. After 1.5 hours my brave wife made it, with everything but her sanity in one piece.

## ***Friday June 25***

The next morning we were off to AFRA to meet many of the 6C 2500 people who had not yet checked into the hotel for a rendezvous before heading to Vigevano, a picturesque small town just west of Milan with its famous Piazza Ducale dal Castello designed by Leonardo de Vinci. A somewhat pleasant drive through the countryside (although it was more urban than countryside) led

us to the piazza for photos and a (again!) a wonderful lunch.



*Piazza Ducale in Vigevano. Photo by Lucie Collins.*

Arno Flach, a friend from Switzerland came down to see us for lunch. It's amazing how close together things are here. After an afternoon sightseeing, sipping wine and chatting we headed back to the hotel.



*The Blue Team dinner.*

About 7:30 we were picked up in a vintage (1950's) bus for the ½ hr. ride to the Alfa Blue Team clubhouse for dinner. The Alfa Blue Team is an exclusive club of 20 Alfisti that live in the Milan area. It is not possible to join unless someone quits or passes away. They meet weekly for dinner at the club and if attendance is missed too often you lose your membership. The clubhouse is full of Alfas and Alfa memorabilia. Not particularly exotic rare Alfas but many ordinary models as well as some oddities (an Alfa hearse and a Gelato wagon). The Alfa artefacts are very interesting (an Alfa stove and

numerous Alfa plates mounted above). This place was a treat to see and enjoy with 40 other Alfa owners, mostly from the 6C 2500 group.

### *Saturday June 26*

The morning started with a drive, en masse, to the University of Milan. As we entered the main campus square we were each handed a square of cardboard to put under our car to avoid any oil spots on the paving stones. Alfa's reputation preceded us. Again it was a nice photo opportunity to have all the 6C 2500s together. We toured part of the university and some of us went (again!) to visit il Duomo nearby. Lucie took her customary trip up the elevator to take photos of the gargoyles and views from the rooftop.



*University of Milan. Photo by Lucie Collins.*

We headed off for lunch at the NH Hotel at the new Fiera di Milano (convention centre) in Rho where Alfa was to unveil their sculpture honouring its 100 years. Lucie and I, by coincidence, had stayed at this lovely modern hotel several times during our times in Milan, at the recommendation of Claudio Georgetti. It was a brand new 5 star hotel but was only 100 Euros/night because no one was using the Fiera yet and they were low on occupancy. The two buildings leaned to one side like the tower at Pisa, although they were modern black glass towers.



*NH Hotel at Fiera di Milano, Rho. Photo by Lucie Collins.*

The Alfisti in Italy were all very disappointed with Alfa Romeo, who contributed virtually nothing to the 100th anniversary celebrations. With the exception of the sculpture, the celebrations were organized and funded by RIAR (Registro Internazionale Alfa Romeo), the owners association. The event at the Fiera was attended by the 6C 2500 register and a thousand other Alfa owners. The 6C 2500 owners had an exclusive parking lot on the west side, near the sculpture unveiling, while the rest of the Alfas were in another parking lot on the North side the building, where the main entrance was. The sculpture was a full size bronze replica of the Disco Volante 1900. It seemed a strange choice, as it wasn't representative of anything significant in Alfa's history, unlike the 159, 33/3 T12, 8c2900, 6c1750, or numerous other models.

That evening after returning to our hotel at San Donato Milanese we drove the Alfas to nearby Novegro to visit the excellent display called "100x100, cento alfa per cent' anni" (100 Alfas from 100 years). This was organized by The Alfa Blue Team with many of the cars belonging to their members. After time to view the display we had a grand dinner.



*100 Alfas for 100 years display.*

## *Sunday June 27*

At 8:00am we were again off on a drive north to the lake district and the town of Canzo. Here our cars parked up the centre of the main street and were swarmed by onlookers and well wishers. We relaxed at a local sidewalk café with a glass of wine while the crowds admired the selection of 20 or so Alfa 6C 2500s.



*Crowded main street in Canzo. Photo by Lucie Collins.*

Next we headed to Magreglio for an afternoon garden party at the elaborate Villa of the Romeo family. Once everyone had arrived (the Giulia owners' club was also attending) and we settled into our place at one of the tables, the Romeo family made some speeches (of which I didn't understand a word) followed by a lovely buffet. Nicola Romeo was a successful industrialist at the time of buying A.L.F.A., so although the automotive manufacturing eventually left the family, it is likely they retained some shares in Alfa Romeo as well as a substantial worth from their other enterprises.

This concluded the Alfa 100th Anniversary Celebrations. I had tried at numerous events to obtain 150 mementos of the anniversary to bring home for our Canadian Alfista but they were not to be had. Not even a bumper or windshield sticker was available as a handout for proud Alfisti to put

in their cars. There was one windshield sticker available at the Fiera for 5 Euros (\$6.50) but it was beyond our budget for 150. At Alfa's 75th birthday I received several mementos such as, a reception invitation at Pebble Beach, calendars, a diary and a notebook each with a beautiful Alfa cover, various stickers. This time the lack of mementos was pathetic.

### ***Monday June 28***

After a lot of frantic sorting and packing the next morning we left for Bergamo where the Alfa was to be dropped off for shipping. With the luggage restrictions when flying these days (1 bag at 55lbs/person) we had to decide what to send in the Alfa (and risk it being stolen en route) and what to take with us, weight being the main concern. A lot of the weight we had were books and magazines I had collected while there. In the end anything replaceable or not important (some books and souvenirs) and heavy liquids (wine, vinegar) were sent in the Alfa. Liquids are not only heavy, they would have needed special packing for the plane. Some things, like the Villa D'Este trophy and mementos had gone home with Lucie on her earlier trip back to Toronto.

I drove the Alfa and Lucie drove the rental car (she was getting pretty good with the standard by now, although still pretty nervous) to Bergamo about 1 ½ hrs from Milan. We found the place and met with Daniele Turrusi, who ran this restoration shop and had a nice chat and lunch with him. A couple of coincidents happened with this. While at dinner at the 100x100 event one of my dinner companions asked where I was shipping the Alfa from. I told him with a fellow called Daniele Turrusi in Bergamo and he said "Really? Daniele used to be my partner. He is a terrific, capable guy and you'll have no problem with your car." That was good to hear. He also had mentioned the TZ he owned while conversing. I saw the picture of the TZ on the wall at Daniele's shop and it looked familiar, so I said "what number is it?" I couldn't believe my ears when he said '084'. It was the TZ that belonged to my long departed old friend and ARCC co-founder Richard Stafferton (ARCC membership #2). It brought a tear to my eye. I had been told only two days earlier that the car was in Rome, which is where they had purchased it.

### ***Tuesday & Wednesday June 29-30***

After dropping off the Alfa we stayed in Bergamo over night (another nice agro-tourism hotel) and visited the walled city overlooking central Bergamo and were back in Milan by Tuesday evening (again at the NH hotel in Fiera) ready for our flight back home to Toronto the next day.

### ***Epilogue***

I had been told the car would take 2 days from Italy to the UK and 10 days to Toronto with a few days here and there for customs. It took 6 weeks. The Alfa eventually arrived home on Friday, August 13 with no damage and nothing stolen, so it was a good luck Friday the 13th. In the almost 3 months in Italy we had nothing stolen, no illness or injuries, no traffic tickets and only a minor, although traumatic, incident with damage to the car.

It was a wonderful experience. I expect it is the dream of every Alfista, like it was for me, to drive his Alfa through the countryside of Italy. The part I had never planned on was how much more enjoyable it was made by the Italian Alfisti we met. Every Alfa has the heart and soul of the Italian culture in it, which is what makes them such a thrill to own and enjoy.

## Upcoming ARCC Events

### Toronto Chapter

Date	Time	Event
April 24	10 am	Tech Session Pinarello Motori
May 6	7 pm	Cruise Night La Paloma
May 16	10 am	Canadian Automotive Museum / Sunday drive
June 3	7 pm	Cruise Night La Paloma
June 19-20	TBD	Vintage Festival/Drive
June 23-27		AROC Alfa Century
July 8	7 pm	Cruise Night La Paloma
July 11	TBD	Sunday Drive
July 17-18	TBD	Toronto / Detroit Rendezvous - Camlachie
August 5	7 pm	Cruise Night La Paloma
August 8	TBD	Sunday Drive
August 22	TBD	Wine Tour or BBQ
Sept. 2	7 pm	Cruise Night La Paloma
Sept. 10-12	TBD	Alfas at the Glen
Sept. 26	TBD	Europa Rally
Oct. 3	TBD	Fall Tour
Oct. 7	TBD	Cruise Night La Paloma
Nov. 2	TBD	Director's Meeting & Pub Night - Cam's Place
Nov. 27	TBD	Holiday Dinner That's Italian

N.B. – Unofficial cruise nights happen every Thursday at La Paloma during the season.

### Ottawa Chapter

Date	Time	Event
May 8	3:30 pm	Where are all the Italian Cars?
May 30	TBD	Oxford Mills Car Show
June 18	6 pm	Weekend Fest Registration – Frank's
June 19	10 am 1 pm 2 pm 3 pm 6 pm pm	Italian Day parade registration – Frank's Lunch Parade Italian Car Show Banquet

### Alfa Romeo Club of Edmonton

Date	Time	Event
May 8	10:30	Tech Session - Lionel's
May	TBD	Spring road trip
June 19	TBD	Rally / Road Trip
July 13	6 pm	Gold Dust Casino
August 3-7	TBD	Rock-N-August
August 29	1 pm	ACE Concours & BBQ
September	TBD	Fall Road Trip
October	TBD	Annual Italian Dinner
December	TBD	Christmas tree hunt

### Calgary Alfa Marque Society

Date	Time	Event
May 6	7 pm	Cruise Night
June 3	7 pm	Cruise Night
July 8	7 pm	Cruise Night
July 17	10 am	European Classic Car Show
August 5	7 pm	Cruise Night
September 2	7 pm	Cruise Night
October 7	6 pm	Cruise Night

### Events of General Interest

- AROC National Convention. Frederick, Maryland, June 23-27.
- Alfa Romeo Centennario. Milano, June, 26-27
- Ferrari Shell Historic Challenge. Mont Tremblant, July 9-11
- Pittsburgh Vintage GP. July 24-25
- Vintage Grand Prix. Watkins Glen, Sept. 9-11

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